



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Friday
8 February 1985

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~~8 February 1985~~

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Date JUN 1999

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Contents

USSR: Rumors Undercut Chernenko	1
Poland-USSR: Impact of Trial	2
Algeria-Morocco: Political and Military Maneuvering	3
Belgium [REDACTED] b3	4
Iran-Iraq [REDACTED] b3	5
Vietnam-ASEAN-Cambodia: Diplomatic Offensive	6
[REDACTED] b3	7
Notes	
[REDACTED]	8
Lebanon: Shia Moderates Turn Toward Radicalism	8
[REDACTED]	9
[REDACTED]	9
In Brief	10
Special Analyses	
[REDACTED]	12
Cuba: Economic Realities Prompt Policy Changes	14

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8 February 1985

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USSR:

Rumors Undercut Chernenko

Some Soviet officials are spreading reports that Chernenko's ouster is imminent, apparently in an effort to undermine him politically.

In a conversation with [redacted] stated that Chernenko would relinquish one of his posts—presumably that of General Secretary—at an extraordinary Central Committee plenum on 27 February.

In late January, [redacted] reported that the Politburo had approved a plan for Chernenko to retire as party chief while retaining the presidency, and for Gorbachev to become general secretary.

Within the past week, in contrast, some Soviet officials have claimed that Chernenko is recovering and remains fully in charge of the party. During the same period all Soviet leaders who have made their election speeches for the RSFSR Supreme Soviet have conveyed Chernenko's personal greetings to their constituents, and some have lavished praise on him.

The predictions of Chernenko's ouster suggest at least an effort to encourage speculation that he will step down soon, perhaps with the object of forcing the succession process in an attempt to preempt emergence of a candidate from the Old Guard. The fact that the reports generally depict Gorbachev as Chernenko's successor may indicate either that they are being floated by Gorbachev supporters or that someone wants it to appear that Gorbachev is plotting against Chernenko. Gorbachev's rival, Grigoriy Romanov, is the party secretary who oversees the KGB and might direct such an effort.

Whatever the case, the conflicting reports on Chernenko's status suggest that some elements within the leadership continue to support him. Voluntary retirement by a general secretary would be unprecedented, and senior Politburo leaders may be reluctant to press Chernenko to retire due to ill health. If Chernenko is unable to resume public activity soon, however, the pressure for his removal probably will increase.

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POLAND-USSR:

Impact of Trial

Failure to impose a death penalty for the killing of Father Popieluszko plus the attacks made against the church during the trial probably have eroded whatever credibility the regime gained by trying four secret policemen. b3

The 25-year sentences given Piotrowski and his superior in the Interior Ministry are the maximum punishment, short of the death penalty, for premeditated murder. The 14- and 15-year terms for the other two accomplices are the maximum sentences for lesser charges. b3

[REDACTED] expected a death sentence, at least for Piotrowski, the chief perpetrator of the crime. Some within the church had argued that the episcopate should not ask for clemency if he received a death sentence. On Wednesday, the episcopate's secretary formally protested the attacks made against the church and Popieluszko during the trial. b3 b1 b3

The prisoners have seven days to appeal. The prosecution, including the auxiliary prosecutors representing the priest's family, have the right to appeal any reduction of the sentences by a higher court. The family's lawyer told Western reporters yesterday, however, that he is satisfied with the sentences. b3

Meanwhile, TASS commented on the trial yesterday before the verdicts were announced. The report briefly criticized the murder as a political provocation, but failed to identify the defendants as secret policemen and attributed the priest's death to a "coincidence of tragic circumstances." It focused its heaviest attacks on the Polish clergy and Western subversion, accusing some clerics of anti-Soviet activities. b3

Comment: The sentences could provoke some spontaneous gatherings in churches and especially at Popieluszko's grave, but the Polish public probably will react with subdued cynicism. Although some clerics may be angered by the sentences, the church is likely to try to dampen popular reaction by preaching that justice has been served. b3

The TASS commentary reflects Moscow's desire to contain the damage to the Polish security apparatus while using the murder to criticize the role of the church. b3

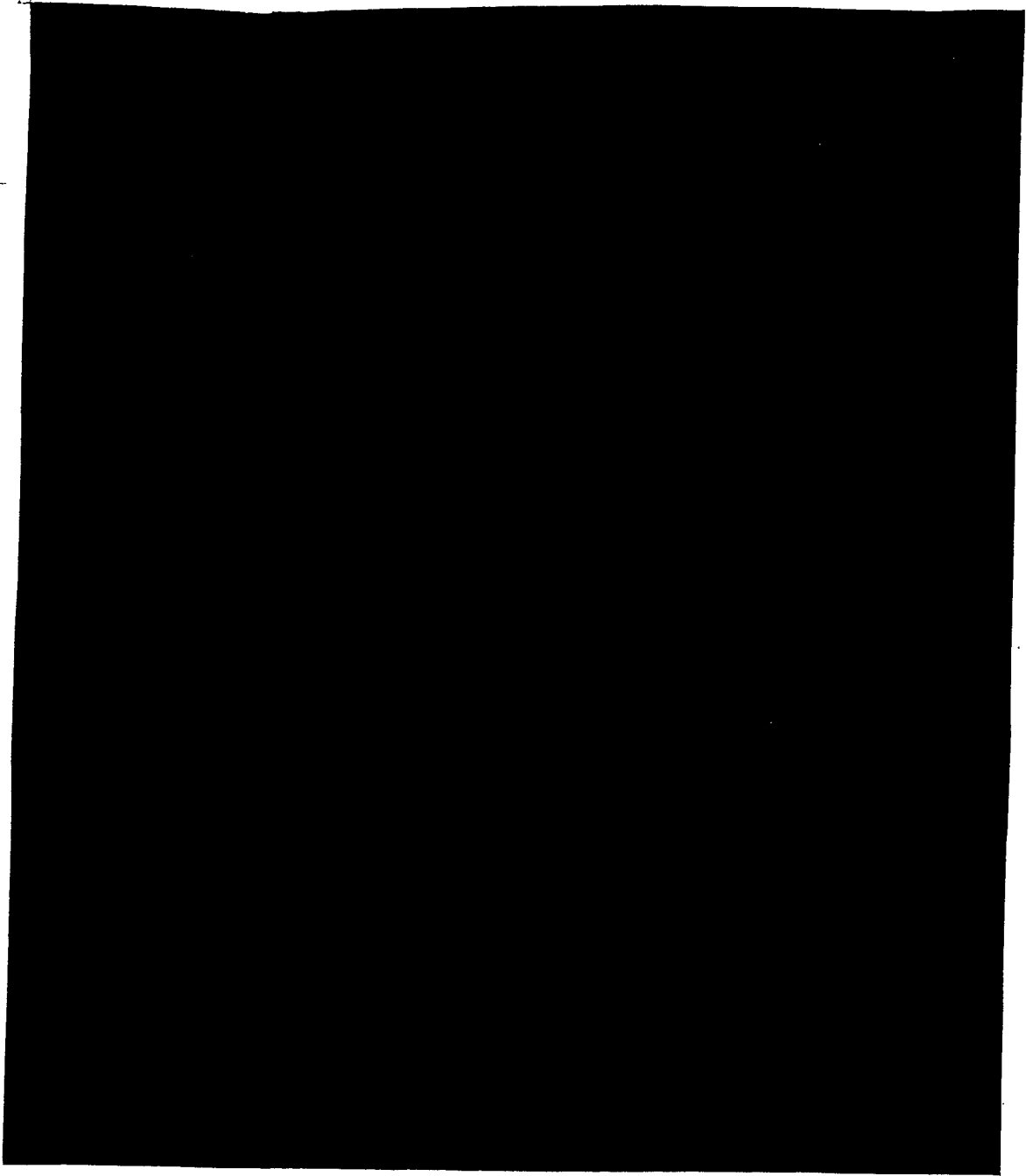
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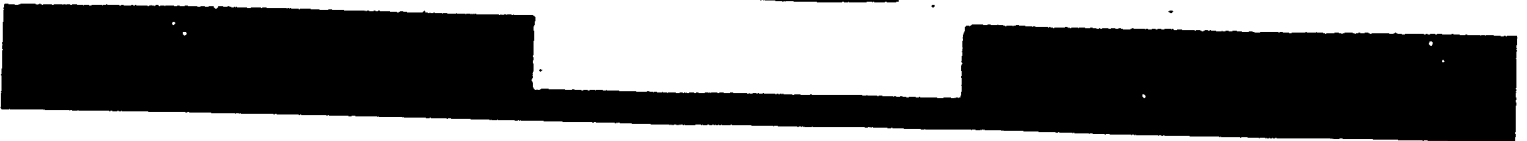
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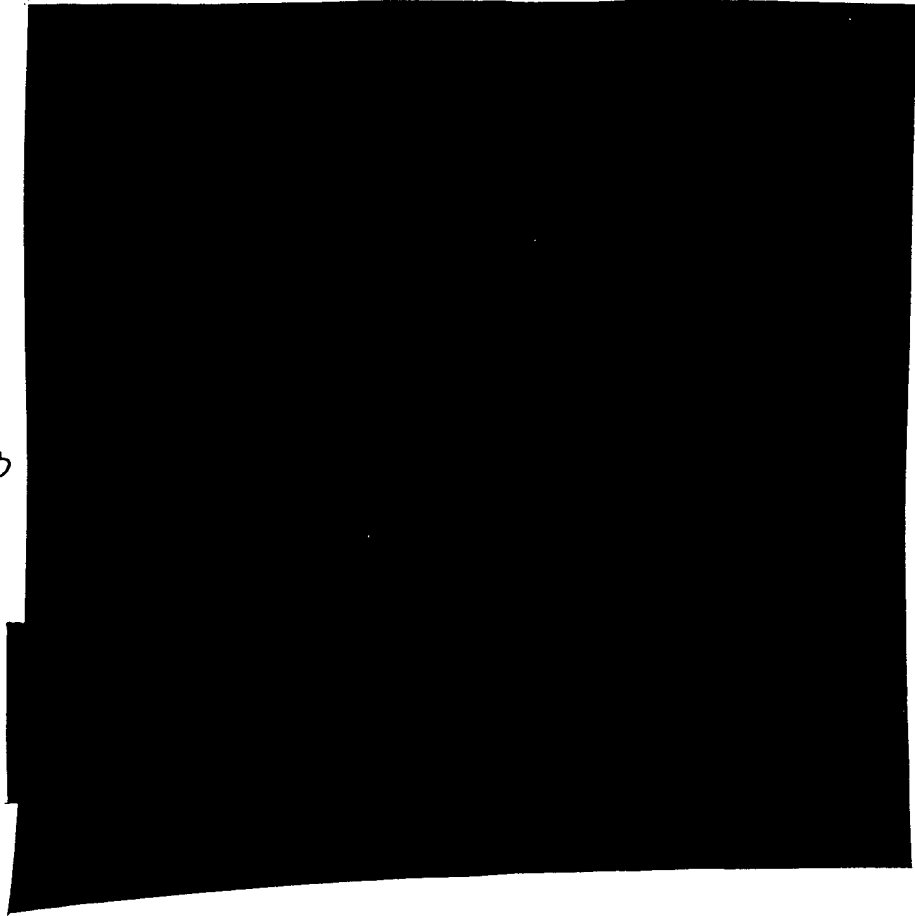
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ALGERIA-
MOROCCO:

Political and Military Maneuvering



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BELGIUM:

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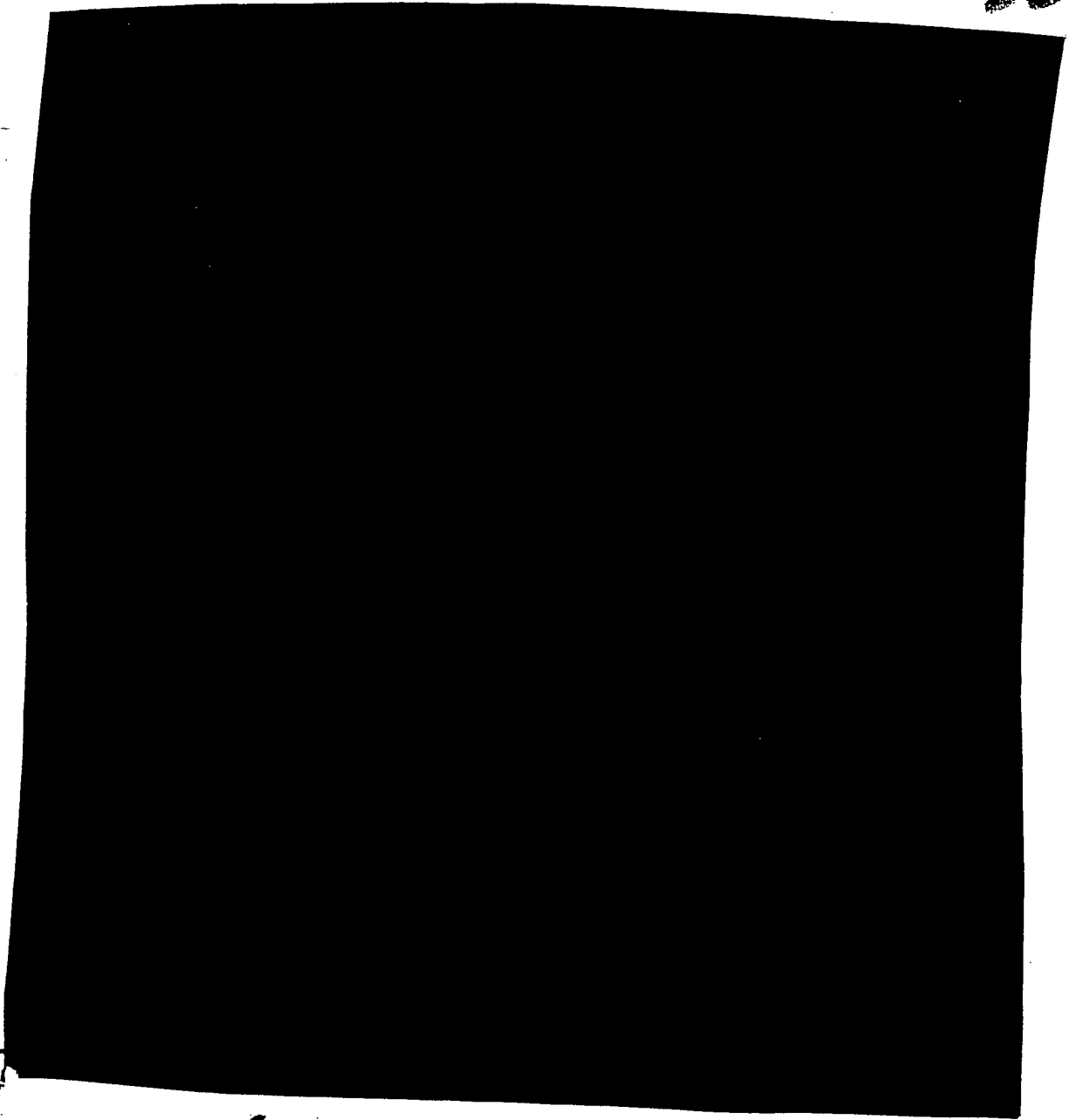
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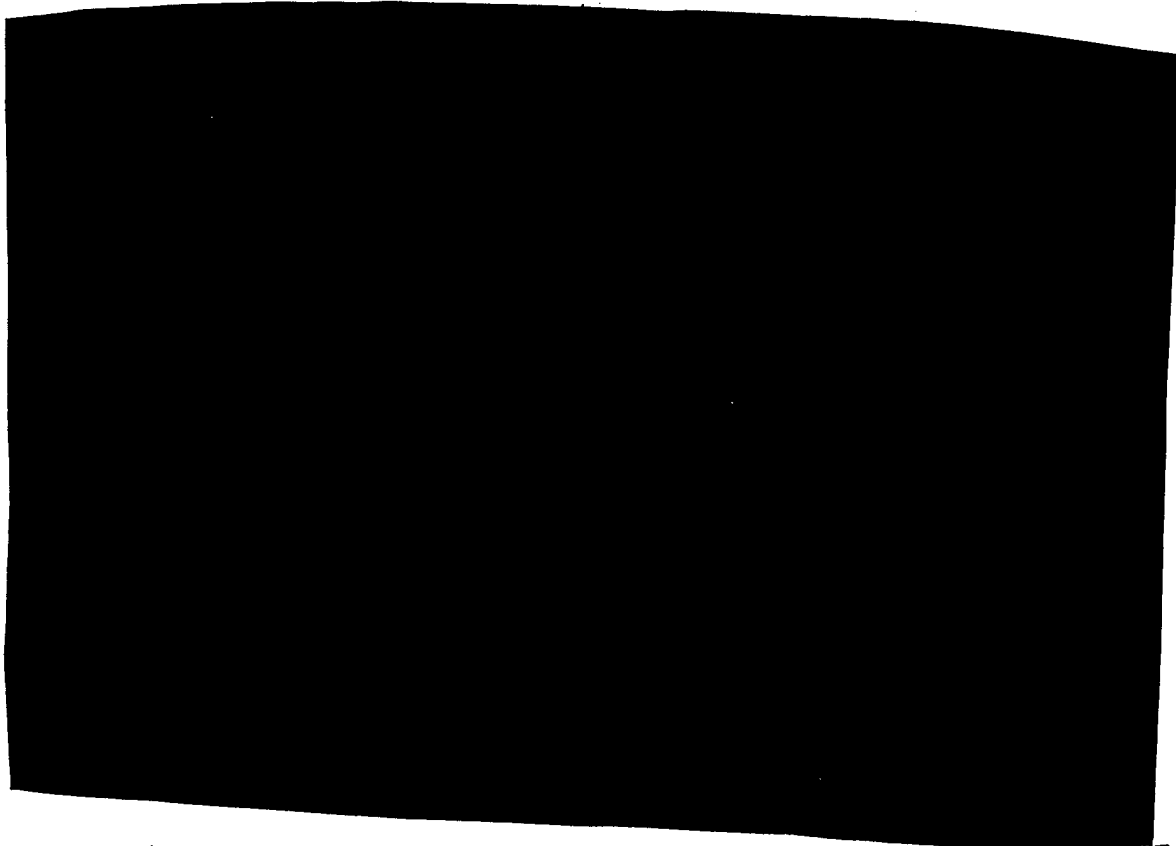
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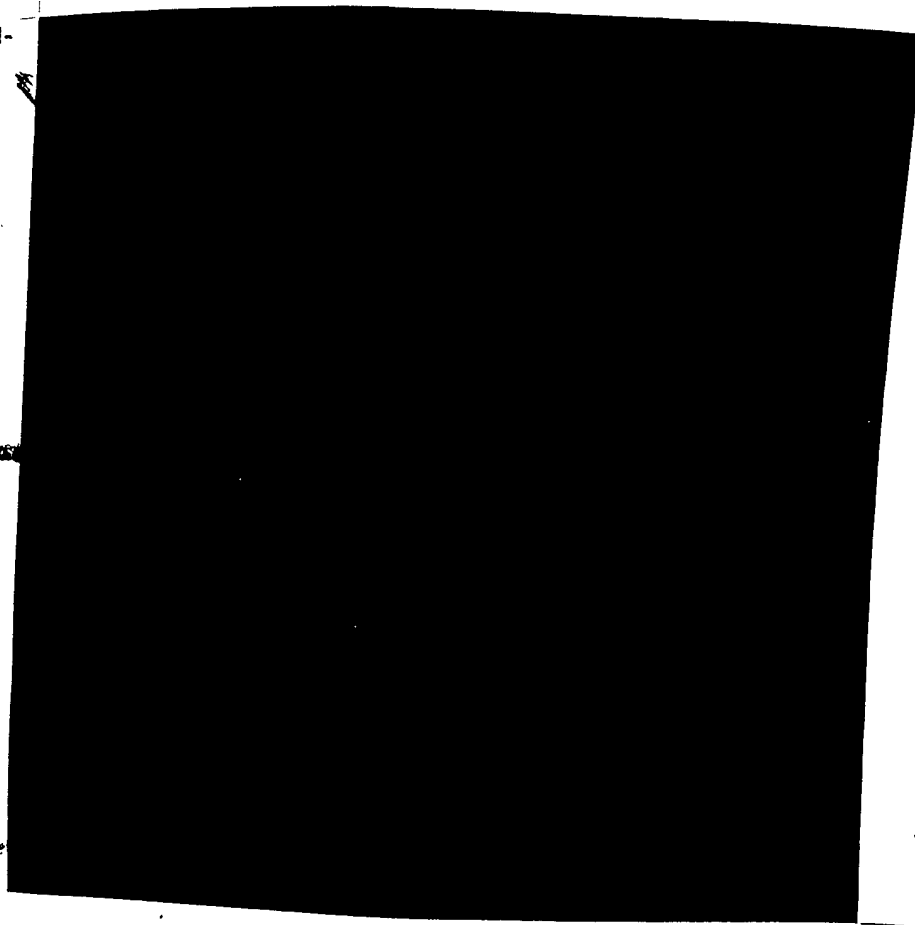
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VIETNAM-ASEAN-
CAMBODIA:

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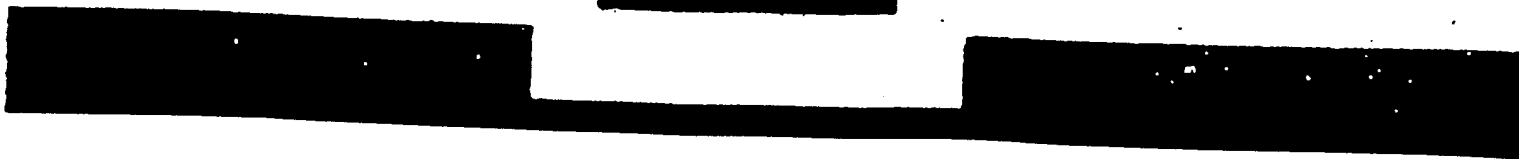


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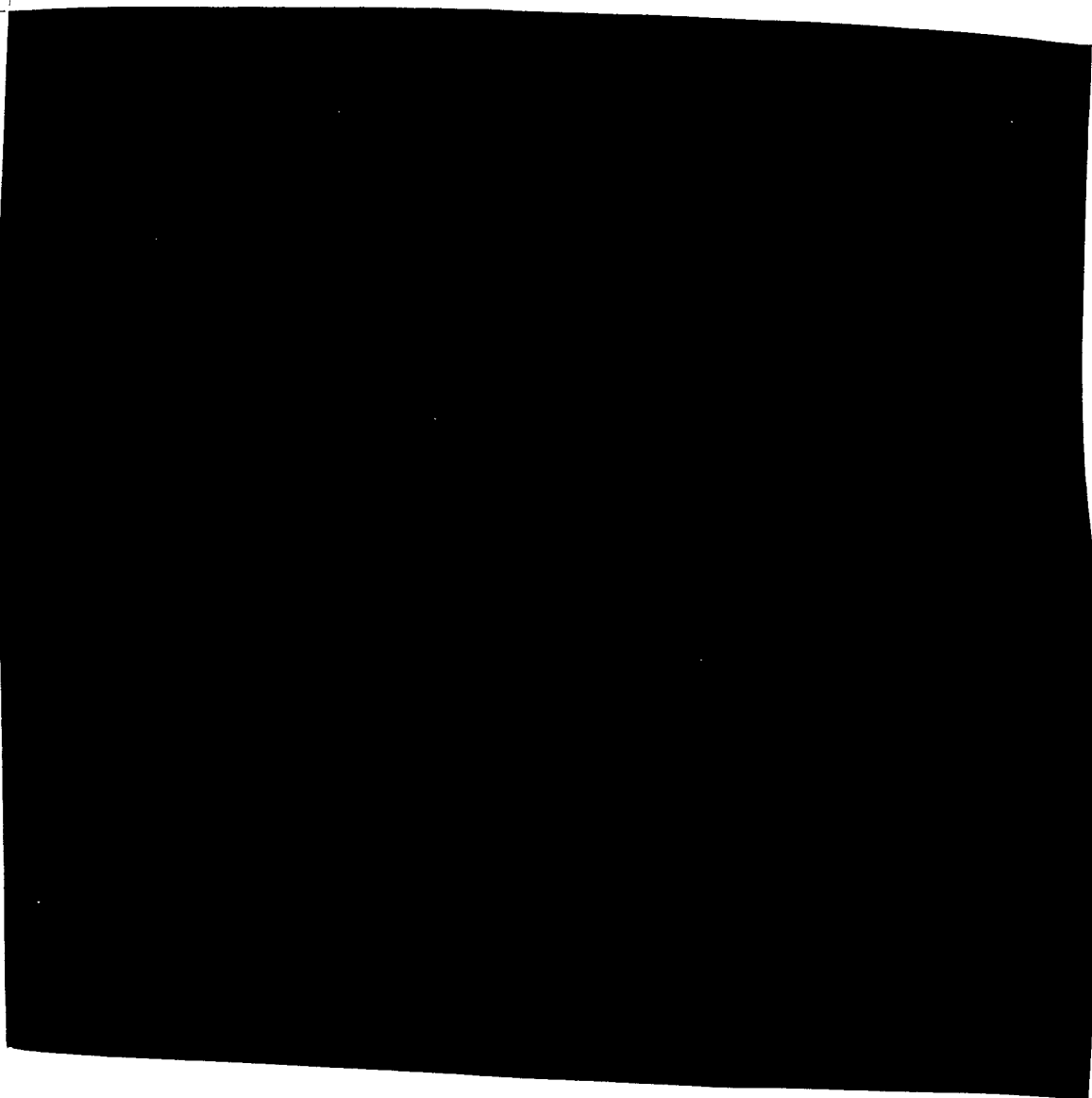
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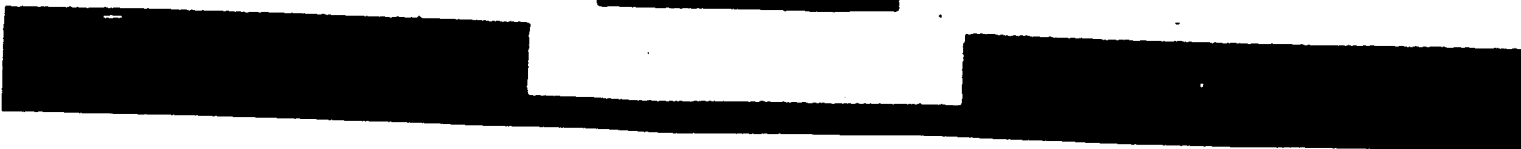


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LEBANON: Shia Moderates Turn Toward Radicalism

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The popularity of pro-Iranian Hizballah fundamentalists is pushing Shia Amal leader Nabih Barri to adopt increasingly radical positions. At a West Beirut rally on Wednesday, Barri promised to launch 50 suicide attacks against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and to pay salaries to anti-Israeli guerrillas. [REDACTED] Amal, which organized the rally, displayed radical Shia symbols such as posters of Ayatollah Khomeini alongside those of Barri.

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[REDACTED] Barri almost certainly hopes to use extremist rhetoric and fundamentalist symbols to strengthen Amal's position among the Shias. The rising popularity of the radical movement has been eroding support for Barri over the past year. Many Shias regard Amal as ineffectual and corrupt, but increasingly see the Hizballah as committed to Shia goals in Lebanon. Barri needs to improve his fundamentalist credentials before the Amal Politburo elections this spring. [REDACTED] b3

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In Brief

USSR

— [redacted] Chernenko addressed Politburo meeting yesterday... [redacted] probably represents effort by Chernenko supporters to counter rumors he is incapacitated. b3

— Soviet commentary on State of Union message says call for production of MX and "militarization of space" reflects intent to seek superiority and casts doubt on sincerity in coming arms talks... also alleges Congressional opposition to President's plans. b3

Asia

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Europe

— Airline service between Greece and US near suspension because of breakdown in civil air negotiations... Athens still unwilling to accept second US airline... suspension could damage important Greek tourism and ailing Olympic Airline. b3

Latin America

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8 February 1985

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Middle East

— Saudi King Fahd again urged Muslim jurists late last month to use independent judgment in decisions on modern problems ... wants flexibility by religious establishment toward modernization ... such efforts to preempt religious conservatives will please technocrats.

— North Yemen has tentatively awarded drilling concession to US oil company ... area of 18,000 square kilometers located west of recent discovery by another US firm ... will further strengthen North Yemen's ties to US. b3

— Jordanian press says PLO Executive Committee decided Tuesday against Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative at this time, though talks will continue ... King Hussein wanted joint proposal before Egyptian President Mubarak's visit to US next month. b3 b1

— Iranian Consultative Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani yesterday confirmed Syrian President Assad to visit Tehran soon ... Persian Gulf Arab states hope Assad will suggest mediating end to war ... Rafsanjani's remarks, however, indicate Iran remains against this. b3

Africa

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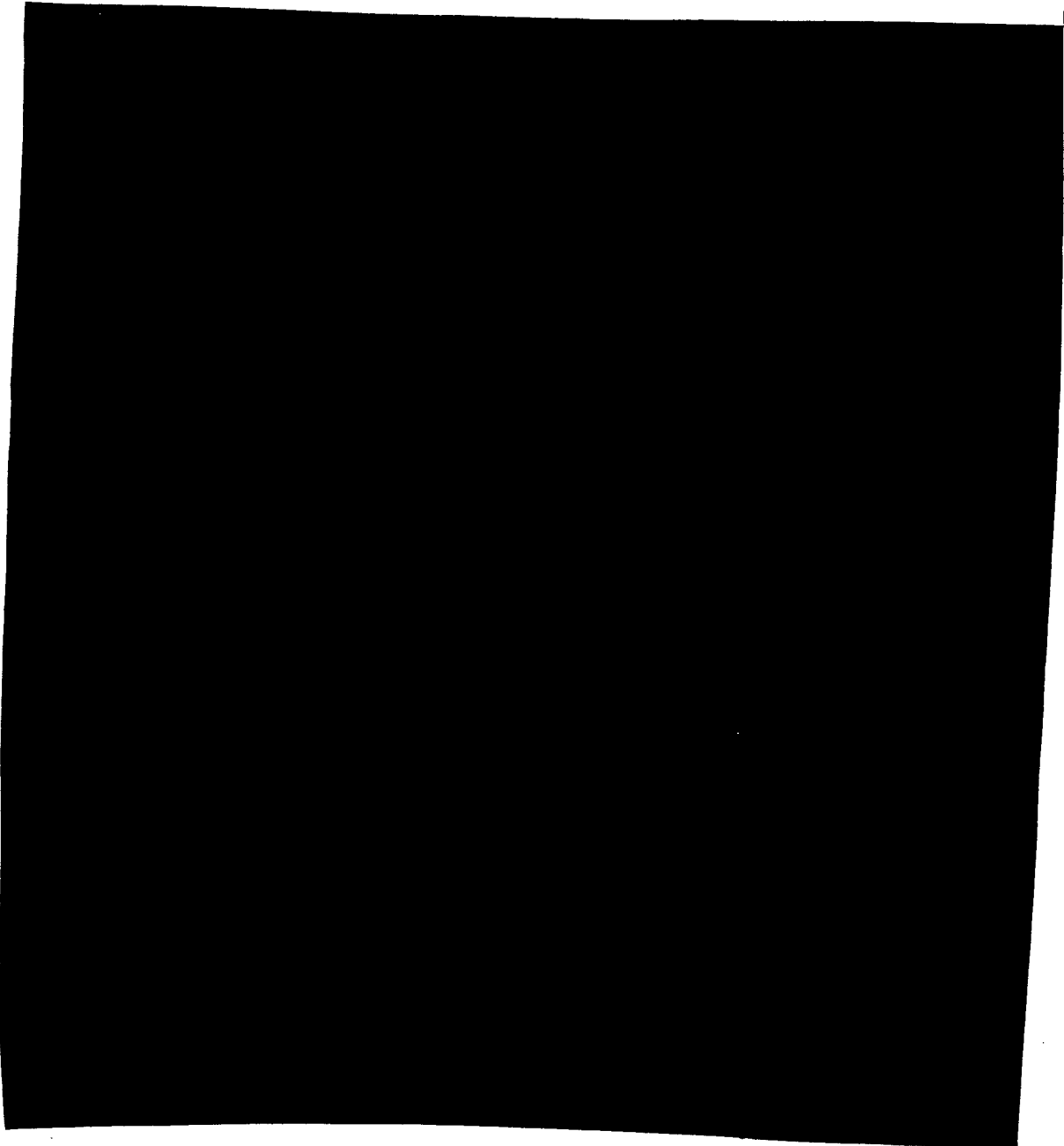
— Ethiopia faces food shortages in capital despite government efforts to shield urban population, prospect of reduced rations increases potential for unrest. b3 b3

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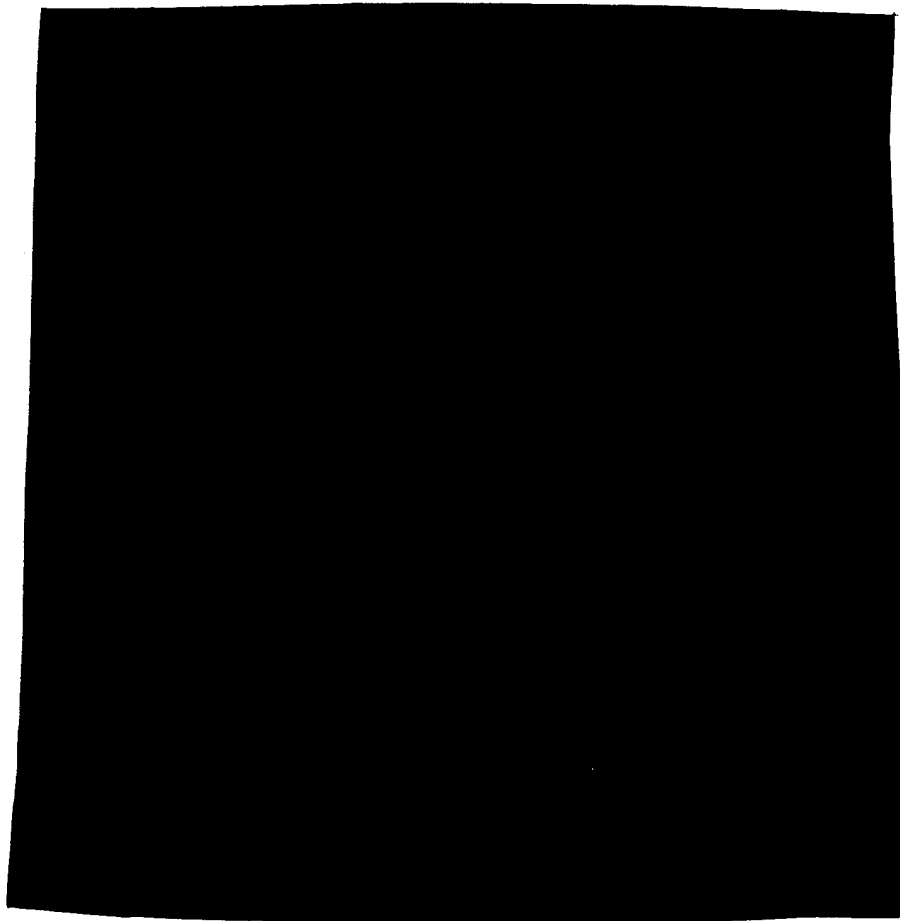
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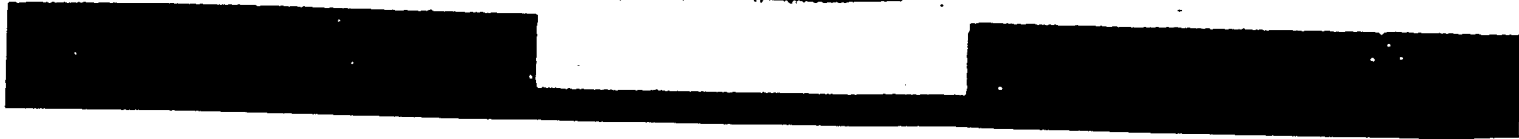


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Special Analysis

CUBA:

Economic Realities Prompt Policy Changes

Cuba's mounting economic problems and Soviet criticism of Havana's economic management probably are behind Fidel Castro's recent emphasis on reducing tensions with the US, on securing greater access to Western markets, and on carrying out austerity measures at home. The punitive action taken last month against two high-ranking party hardliners, presumably for opposing Castro's policy shifts, is another sign of a resurgence by the pragmatists in the Cuban leadership. These leaders may counsel Castro to reduce his support to foreign radical groups and to reduce tensions with the US, but his recent public statements indicate that he remains unwilling to modify his ties to Moscow or renounce his commitment to armed revolution.

Havana gambled last year that a burst of spending on imports and government construction projects would stimulate sustained economic growth. Although moderate growth was attained, it became clear by the time of the CEMA meeting in Havana last October that Cuba could no longer afford to stimulate the economy through increased imports without concurrently expanding exports to earn hard currency.

Castro Declares Economic War

Following the CEMA meeting, Castro convened a meeting of the top leadership to review the country's economic difficulties and revise the 1985 economic plan quickly. He called on all Cubans to wage an "economic war" against waste and inefficiency, and warned them that they will face hardships for at least another 15 years.

The thrust of the new economic policy—increasing exports to the West, meeting trade commitments to Communist countries, and limiting imports of consumer goods—reflects Cuba's need to save foreign exchange. The new focus on austerity and conservation measures, however, probably will result in declining real growth.

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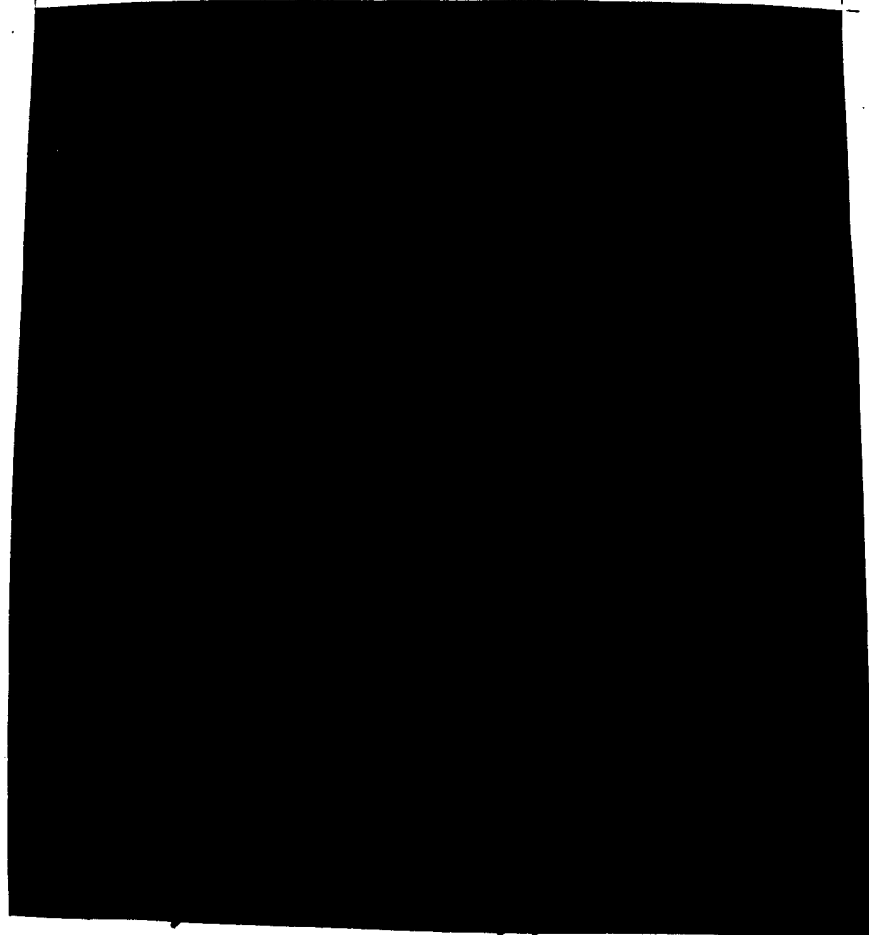
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Energy rationing and cuts in construction and social service projects are likely to cause Cuba to fall far short of its 5-percent growth target for this year. ~~SECRET~~ b3

Implications of Policy Changes



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